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Human Rights

EAST TIMOR
An Abandoned People?

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

EAST TIMOR
An Abandoned People?

Interventions
Resolutions
Messages
Letters

Pax Christi International
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Introduction

East Timor was invaded by the Indonesian army on 7 December 1975. Until then, for 400 years, East Timor had been a neglected backwater in Portugal's colonial empire. Imperfectly colonized, it was politically and economically undeveloped. For many years the territory has been almost completely isolated from the outside world.

The international community has recognised the serious character of the abuses that have occurred in East Timor. It remains on the agenda of the United Nations. The question of East Timor is one of the most difficult items to be discussed in the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in Geneva. Pax Christi International has criticized over and over again the Indonesian government for the violation of human rights in East Timor.

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A **first part** of this publication contains some of the interventions made by Pax Christi International over the past 8 years at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. An extended intervention was made in 1983 by Adrien-Claude Zôller, the Co-ordinator of the Human Rights Commission of Pax Christi International in Geneva. In 1984 an oral intervention for Pax Christi International on the question of East Timor was delivered by Mgr. Martinho Lopes, Apostolic Administrator of Dili, resignator 1983. The Commission never heard a direct witness of the events in East Timor. Mgr. Lopes was a first witness before the Commission. Meanwhile, Mgr. Martinho da Costa Lopes, who headed the Catholic Church in East Timor from 1977 to 1983, died on 27 February 1991. Again in 1986 an oral intervention of Pax Christi International on East Timor was presented at the United Nations' Commission for Human Rights in Geneva, 42nd Session. The main issue was the right of self-determination with special attention for East Timor. More recently in a joint statement with many other NGO's, Pax Christi International intervened at the UN Commission for Human Rights in Geneva on the situation of the human rights in East Timor, February 22, 1991. On 18 June 1991, Mr. Jacques Vittori, the representative of Pax Christi International, intervened at the 78th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva on the situation in East Timor.

Interventions were also made by Pax Christi International at the Sub-Commissions on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: 22 August 1984, 26 August 1985, 27 August 1987 and 18 August 1988. Oral interventions were made at the UN Commission on Human Rights: 8 February 1988 and 7 February 1989. These texts are not mentioned in this publication.

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The International Council of Pax Christi International adopted two Resolutions on East-Timor. These texts are presented in a **second part**. A first Resolution on East-Timor was unanimously adopted at the International Council in Bruges, 12-15 June 1985. A new Resolution on East-Timor was adopted unanimously at the International Council in Vicenza (Italy), 7-10 May 1986.

* * *

Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo SDB, Titular Bishop of Lorium, Apostolic Administrator of Dili, sent a letter to Dr. Javier Pèrez de Cuellar, Secretary General of the United Nations, 6 February 1989, asking 'to hold a referendum promoted by the United Nations for the people of East Timor.' In a letter to Pèrez de Cuellar, Franz Cardinal König, the International President of Pax Christi, endorsed the idea of realizing a referendum in East Timor that will allow the Timorese people to free-

ly choose their own fate. On 6 February 1990, Manuel da Silva Martins, Bishop of Setùbal and President of Pax Christi Portugal sent a letter to several of his colleagues Bishops concerning the role of the United Nations in the question of East Timor and asked them to write a letter to Secretary-General Dr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. See for the letters in a **third part.**

* * *

The United Nations' Special Committee on Decolonization organized a regional seminar in Bridgetown, Barbados, June 1990. **Part four** contains a presentation, made by Sr. M.B. Reissen (the representative for Pax Christi International) concerning the violations of the right to self-determination, individual and peoples rights. In a speech Sr. Reissen stressed attention on the situation of Namibia, South Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and East Timor. Concerning the situation in East Timor, Sr. Reissen stated that "Pax Christi calls for: the immediate cessation of all human rights violations; the end of Indonesian military operations in East Timor; the opening of the entire territory to humanitarian assistance organizations and international human rights organizations". Sr.M.B.Reissen said that the more than 100,000 deaths in East Timor were indicative of genocide. She deplored human rights violations there and urged the Special Committee to send a visiting mission to meet with Bishop Filipe X.Belo and other Timorese leaders who were seeking a referendum under United Nations auspices. She also recommended that the United Nations prepare a fact sheet on East Timor and update its 1976 decolonization pamphlet on that territory.

A meeting was held in Commemoration of the Second Anniversary of Bishop Belo's Appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General for a Referendum in East Timor, New York, 6 February 1991. A message was delivered by Etienne De Jonghe, the International Secretary of Pax Christi. The parallel between Kuwait and East Timor was emphasized by many participants in the meeting. Maria Luisa França, the Vice-President of the Portuguese section of Pax Christi, delivered a message at the commemorative meeting on East Timor, United Nations in New York, 6 February 1991. Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton, Bishop President of Pax Christi USA, delivered a message to the participants in the meeting commemorating the second anniversary of Bishop Belo's appeal for a referendum in East Timor. The **fifth part** of this publication contains the texts of the several messages and a report written by Sr. M.B. Reissen.

* * *

Meanwhile many Pax Christi sections have developed several initiatives on the problem of East Timor. Especially Pax Christi Portugal, Pax Christi Australia and Pax Christi Netherlands are involved in this issue. **Part six** contains a declaration and a letter from the Australian section.

* * *

Pax Christi International was also involved in the organization of a meeting of Members of Parliament from Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and Australia with the UN Secretary-General to discuss the situation in East Timor, March 25, 1991, in New York. East Timor will remain on the agenda of our movement. ■

1/ INTERVENTIONS

UN Commission on Human Rights - 39th Session

Intervention by Adrien-Claude Zöller, Coordinator of the Human Rights Commission of Pax Christi International, 7 February 1983

Point 9 of the agenda: "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples subjected to colonial or foreign domination or foreign occupation".

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission,

The International Catholic Peace Movement, Pax Christi, in its action in favour of justice and respect for Human Rights all over the world, is particularly sensible to the realization of the right of all peoples to self-determination. In the course of the last years our national sections dealt with several tragic situations, caused by the refusal to give this right of self-determination to certain peoples, notably in Southern Africa, in the Middle East and in Afghanistan.

During a meeting we had in August 1982 with the mission of the Special Committee on Decolonization in Brussels, Pax Christi International had the opportunity to express its support to the initiatives of the United Nations in this field and to communicate its position on these matters in particular on the case of East Timor.

At this occasion we would like to expose before your honorable commission, a particularly tragic case, notably the situation in East Timor. We do this while paying special attention to the consequences for the Human Rights situation that results from the Indonesian invasion of the Timorese territory on 7 December 1975.

This military invasion by the Indonesians has been particularly brutal. A Catholic priest writes: "In the port of Dili (capital) there are 23 battleships bombing the hills that surround Dili 24 hours on 24". He speaks of 8 to 12 helicopters, airplanes, innumerable tanks and about 50,000 soldiers.

Several witnesses, whose testimonies have come to us in spite of the almost hermetic isolation of the country, mention hundreds of summary executions shortly after the taking of the capital on 9 December 1975. "The first two days of the invasion about 500 men and women were led to the quay and executed one by one; the victims had to stand on the edge of the quay so that their bodies fell into the water".

The war that followed this invasion was very murderous. In this territory of 18,989 km^2 the diocese of Dili took a census in 1974: 688,771 inhabitants were counted. In October 1978, almost three years after the invasion, the Assistant of Defence and Security of the territory counted 329,271 inhabitants. These figures, cited in a report of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (1979) are astounding: between these two censuses not less than 359,000 inhabitants were missing.

Indonesian sources tell us that since the October '78 census more than 100,000 people left the mountains where they had taken refuge to return to the zones controlled by the Indonesian forces. In this hypothesis, which is without any doubt optimistic, still 250,000 Timorese are missing.

The Indonesian armed forces met with the unexpected resistance from the Fretilin, the liberation movement that proclaimed independence of the territory on 28 November 1975 and enjoys a large popular support. In May 1976 a great part of the population moved to the interior of the country seeking the protection of the Fretilin troops. Facing this resistance the Indonesian army started with successive offensives that caused numerous deaths among the civil population: massacres, summary executions of captured Fretilin soldiers, villages destroyed, etc. ...

In the report of the Foreign Affairs group of the Australian Parliament of 8 March 1979 the following confidences of an Indonesian official can be read: "It is true that 100,000 persons have died in the Timorese war (...) hundreds of villages have been wiped off the earth's surface by bombings".

This report concludes: "the forced integration of East Timor into Indonesia takes on genocidal dimensions".

The very high number of victims can be explained by the Indonesian military strategy, which tries to separate the population from the Fretilin forces and uses counter-insurrection techniques, tried out in Indochina and actually being used in Central America. Thus the Indonesian forces proceeded with forced displacement of tens of thousands of persons to strategic hamlets, a kind of large concentration camps where famine and epidemics prevail.

A long time ignored by the international community, the tragedy of the Timorese people holds the attention since the end of 1978, when finally some foreign delegations were authorized to visit the country. In September 1978, a group of journalists and diplomats visited the country on the invitation of the Indonesian Government. And although it was a 'guided' visit, several of these people gave the alarm saying that : "More than 100,000 people live in conditions of complete starvation". When the International Red Cross finally could visit the country in the summer of 1979, the delegates spoke of a 'second Cambodia' and asserted that "about 60.000 people are living in desperate conditions and would probably die in spite of the assistance".

The war completely disorganized the agricultural production. It caused ravages in the rural areas. And the regroupment of the population in concentration camps prevented all seeding and harvest. Moreover in the summer of 1979 the region was hit by a long period of drought.

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission,

We reveal the case of East Timor in the first place because of the information we recently received. We are afraid that the present situation in East Timor is similar to the situation in 1979. Four reports prepared by catholic and protestant delegates between April and August 1982, describe the catastrophic conditions the population is living in.

In particular in the eastern districts of the country, an area stricken by a new famine. Thousands of Timorese have been recruited by force and are used as a shield by the indonesian forces in their military operations. The conditions in prisons are particularly distressing especially for the more than 5,000 prisoners on the island of Atauro. In the course of the summer of 1982 hostilities have resumed and once again the Indonesian forces use extreme brutalities. These reports have been confirmed by the information some catholics were able to bring out of the country. It was this kind of information that made 75 members of the American Congress write a letter of protest against this tragedy to President Reagan at the occasion of President Suharto's visit to the US.

Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than 200,000 Timorese already paid for the invasion of the Indonesian forces with their lives. This is almost a third of the population. Is it not time therefore, to multiply the initiatives in order to stop this genocide? From a strictly humanitarian point of view the analysis shows that the only way to end this genocide is that the Indonesians leave, because the ravages were caused mainly by the policy of forced integration destroying all local structures.

But, in the short run, it seems to us that the Human Rights commission could contribute to the alleviation of this suffering, in particular by pronouncing itself on following points:

- Ask the Indonesian Government to allow the entry of experts of humanitarian and development organizations, including the establishment of their offices in East Timor.
- Appoint a special rapporteur, or confide an investigation on the Human Rights situation in East Timor to the Secretariat.
- Have the case of East Timor on the agenda of the 40th Session of the Commission.

Finally we would like to cite these 13 portuguese who have worked in Timor and who wrote a letter to John Paul II (1982) declaring:

"The voice of the people of Timor does not reach the free world. This people only has confidence in the Church and in Government people who love peace and justice and anxiously hope that they will do something in their favour".

Mister President, it was this desperate cry that invited us to do this intervention. We are convinced that your commission will answer it favorably. I thank you for your attention.

UN Commission on Human Rights - 40th Session

Intervention of Pax Christi International, by Mgr. Martinho da Costa Lopes (Apostolic Administrator of Dili, resignator 1983) 21 Februari 1984.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to produce some considerations concerning the plight of East Timor. As you know, East Timor lies some 400 miles off the North-West coast of Australia. Before World War II, the Western half of the island was administrated by the Netherlands, and the Eastern half by Portugal. When Indonesia achieved its independence from the Netherlands, in 1949, the Western half became part of Indonesia, while Portugal continued to administer the Eastern half - East Timor - until 1974, when it decided to decolonize East Timor by permitting a formation of the local and political parties - UDT, FRETILIN, APODETI, KOTA and TRABALHISTA - as a first step towards self-determination by the East Timorese people.

In August 1975, the Portuguese authorities evacuated East Timor during civil disorders fomented in part by the Indonesians. In November 1975 Fretilin proclaimed the Democratic Republic of East Timor independent and on 7 December 1975, Indonesia invaded and annexed the territory. More than 100,000 East Timorese have died from war, famine and disease.

Since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, in 1975, the United Nations consistent with its principles and Charter, have almost reaffirmed the right of East Timorese people to self-determination. In fact, according to the principles of United Nations Charter and in accordance with the international Covenants on Civil and Political Rights: "all people have the right of self-determination". The Timorese are people. Therefore they have the right of self-determination.

Although the principles are clear enough and favoring the cause of East Timor, however, some nations have been reluctant to recognize it in practical terms. Some said they have commercial links, a big financial investment in Indonesia, and so they are afraid of losing such a big market as Indonesia. So, generally, they have abstained in their voting in the General Assembly and practically they have denied the right of self-determination to East Timor. To some extent, I understand their position, when they strive to seek good relations and commercial links with Indonesia. But, what I can't understand is that they willingly sacrifice the right of self-determination of East Timor in exchange for money, commerce and material commodities. I do not approve such a criteria. I think in a conflict raised between Human Rights and commerce, we have to give priority to fundamental Human Rights.

On the other hand I think that there is no contradiction between commercial link and Human Rights. So, we can promote commercial links with Indonesia, but at the same time we have to recognize the right of East-Timorese people to self-determination and independence.

I know that it was suggested that East Timor should be regarded as a natural part of Indonesia, because of historical, ethnic, cultural and geographical ties between the two countries. In my opinion, this argument does not stand up to close scrutiny. In fact, the Timorese people and Indonesians are essentially distinct people. The Timorese people are Melanesians, while the Indonesians are Javanese. On the other side, if geographic contiguity and tenuous historical and other links are legitimate grounds for this incorporation, Indonesia could also justifiably annex the Eastern states of Malaysia and Papua-New-Guinea, which share these traits in common with Indonesia. But, there is another objection: that Indonesians have spent a lot of money in East Timor from 1975 until now. I accept the fact but I have another quite different interpretation of aid.

Firstly I would like to ask this question. Who forced Indonesians to spend such money in East Timor? Secondly, it should not be forgotten that such expenditure is intended to consolidate integration by furthering the 'Indonesianazation' of East Timor, which is the very point at issue. Thirdly, with these expenditures the Indonesians are trying to deflect your attention from other facets, such as military activities, manifold restrictions on basic liberties, human rights abuses and so on.

We know that some delegations went last year to visit East Timor, but unfortunately they were not able to ask the people what they want. I am East-Timorese myself and I know very well what the feelings are in their hearts. So, I can tell you what they want. What they want is the opportunity to decide for themselves their own political future. In my point of view, it seems that only a genuine and completely free act of self-determination will bring peace to East Timor. Otherwise the war will go on and on, for as long as justice and freedom are denied to the East Timorese people.

After 8 years of war, the resistance of the people is going on against Indonesian aggression. This seems to be a clear indication that the East Timorese people want not to be integrated by force into the Republic of Indonesia, but rather to be independent and rule their own political destiny. I myself would have no objections, if the East-Timorese people, free of all kind of pression, from inside or outside, choose integration with Indonesia. But on the contrary, if the East Timorese people want to be independent at all costs, I will have no doubt at all but to grant it, because it will be the right way based on the people's free will and on the principles of democracy.

UN Commission on Human Rights - 42nd Session

Intervention by Pax Christi International, 26 February 1986.

Point 9 of the Agenda: 'Self-determination'.

Mr. President,

Pax Christi International, international catholic peace movement, attaches great importance to the rights of peoples to self-determination: the exercise of this right is a strictly necessary condition to reach justice and peace, on regional as well as on universal level.

This it is stressed in the resolutions adopted by the Commission during previous sessions for this point of the agenda: the right of peoples to self-determination is baffled when a territory is subject to a colonial or foreign occupation.

But, we would also like to underline that there are many other situations throughout the world where the populations do not

have the possibility to determine their own destiny and development strategy. In all these countries a small minority has all the economic and political power and oppresses the majority of the population, very often with the support and the complicity of foreign powers. ./. the commission should envisage supplementary measures if the international community which abides by the principles of the rights of peoples does not want to bow to the policy of the 'fait accompli'.

Mr. President,

In December 1985 it was the 20th anniversary of the brutal invasion of the Indonesian forces in East Timor. In spite of formal condemnations by the Security Council and the General Assembly, this occupation of a country which has been proclaimed independent, continued. Everything points to the fact that the international community has chosen to closes its eyes to this fact. The economic and strategic interests of many countries in Indonesia seem to win over justice.

In previous interventions we already underlined that Pax Christi International does not nurse any particular grudge against Indonesia or its representatives. When we intervene again Indonesia is because the testimonies and reports on the tragic situation in East Timor are still coming in. It is three years since we launched a cry of alarm before this commission asking information on more than 150,000 persons missing (on a population of about 650,000 inhabitants in 1974). After having denied the facts, the Indonesian authorities talked about exaggerated figures, before admitting on this floor that about 100,000 persons had lost their lives.

On June 28, 1985 the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Mochtar Kusumaatmadje declared:

"I do not deny that mistakes have been made, that there have been irresponsible attitudes, incidents due to a lack of soldiers, but we are firmly resolved to improve the situation."

The human rights violations in East Timor are of the worst. The Indonesian armed forces summarily executed thousands of people. There are still cases of torture and disappearances. You know that the forced regroupment of the population in strategic hamlets completely dislocated the agricultural production structures bringing periods of famine and the death of hundreds of people.

Mr. President,

For point 10 of the agenda of this session, we will give detailed information on news which reached us on cases of torture, disappearances and trials in East Timor. The great efforts undertaken by Indonesia in the field of developing the infrastructure of this occupied territory, unfortunately did not lead to an improvement of the human rights situation even if the I.R.C.C. was authorized to visit the country a couple of times - it was not allowed to visit all the places of detention.

Mr. President,

East Timor is hermetically closed. The only visits tolerated are the ones which are well prepared by the occupier. Staging, as well as the misuse of - even false information on - remarks made by certain personalities in Dili, are numerous. In proof of this, we can refer to the talks we had with the Apostolic Administrator, Mgr. Belo, who formally denied the statements of the Indonesian delegation to the 41st Session of the Commission. For several years now, we have been asking the permission to send a fact-finding mission. As long as the territory is not completely open, Indonesia will not enjoy credibility in this matter.

Mr. President,

It is absolutely necessary that the United Nations take some steps to stop the serious and massive human rights violations in Timor.

UN Commission on Human Rights 47th Session

On 22 February 1991, in a joint statement with many other NGO's, Pax Christi International intervened at the UN Commission for Human Rights in Geneva on the situation of the human rights in East Timor.

Mr. Vittori (Pax Christi International) said that his organization had consistently denounced the aggression of Indonesia against East Timor for many years and appealed to the conscience of the international community to secure the implementation of Security Council resolution 384 (1985) calling on Indonesia to withdraw all its forces without delay from that territory. Although for a long time viewed with indifference, the aggression by Indonesia was today being compared more and more with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Out of desperation, young Timorese, following the example of the young Palestinians, were now waging a war of stones and the United Nations could not, without discrediting itself, apply different standards in the cases of East Timor and Kuwait. Mr. Vittori renewed the appeal made by Monsignor Belo for a referendum to be held in East Timor under United Nations auspices to enable the Timorese people to make their choice in complete freedom.

International Labour Organization 78th Session

On 18 June 1991, Mr. Jacques Vittori, the representative of Pax Christi International, intervened at the International Labour Conference in Geneva on the situation in East Timor. Mr. Vittori referred to resolution 384 of the UN Security Council.

"./. The workers and their families are, in every country, the first to suffer from a military occupation. Could not the Conference, as it has done for the occupied Arab territories, entrust the Director-General with drawing up a report on the situation of the workers in the territory which has been occupied for 15 years in violation of international law. And I am referring to East Timor. ./."

Mr. Simanjuntak, Government delegate, Indonesia, took his right of reply concerning the statement made by Mr. Vittori:

"We have witnessed once again in this session a supporter of a former colonial regime who has abused the proceedings of this august body to raise a non-relevant issue concerning my country. My delegation would place on record its strong objection to the reference made in this case by Pax Christi International. In my delegation's view, those who benefited from the colonial system that brought about nothing but tragedy and misery to the Indonesian people of East Timor throughout its more than four hundred years of colonization, have forfeited the right to preach on human rights and the self-determination of peoples."

Mr. Vittori received congratulations from the representative of the Portuguese government. ■

2/ RESOLUTIONS ON EAST-TIMOR

Resolution unanimously adopted at the Pax Christi International Council in Bruges (B), 12-15 June 1985.

Since the invasion of East-Timor by Indonesia in December 1975, Pax Christi International has intervened many times at the United Nations, in order to stop the massacres. According to the Indonesian government itself, there have been more than 100,000 deaths.

The International Council is of the opinion that Indonesian forces are committing actual genocide in East Timor.

Pax Christi expresses its support with the whole Catholic Church in Timor, especially with Mgr. Carlos Filipe X. Belo, whose position against this genocide is well known.

Pax Christi urges:

1.the international press to give better information, covering the genocide of the Timorese people;

2.the governments to demand from Indonesia some concrete steps leading to a solution of this problem. Among these, we demand:

- The opening of the territory to humanitarian help organizations, of which the Timorese people have an urgent need, and to international organizations on human rights.
- The withdrawal of Indonesian populations sent to East Timor.
- The end of the military operations and the withdrawal of the Indonesian military reinforcements sent after Augustus 1983.
- The renewal of the conversations between Indonesia and the representatives of the Timorese people, especially the Fretilin, started in May 1983 and interrupted in August same year.
- The participation of representatives of the Timorese people in the negotiations, which are taking place between Portugal and Indonesia at the U.N.

Resolution adopted unanimously at the Pax Christi International Council in Vicenza (I), 3-10 May 1986.

The International Council of Pax Christi, meeting in Vicenza (7-10 May 1986) has considered the situation in East Timor.

The International Council:

1/ deplores the continuing abuses of human rights in East Timor, including summary executions, disappearance of many who have been taken prisoner, arbitrary detentions and torture;

2/ invites the national sections to press their respective Governments, episcopal conferences and other organizations to take all appropriate measures in support of the principles of self-determination and respect of human rights for the people of East Timor;

3/ asks member-states of the European Community and the European Parliament to press the Government of Indonesia to end abuses of human rights and call for inclusion of East Timorese representatives in negotiations regarding their future;

4/ calls on the forthcoming meeting of non-aligned countries to take up the issue of East Timor as a matter of priority;

5/ states Pax Christi's intention to continue its active intervention at the United Nations in support of the above positions. ■

3/ LETTERS OF SUPPORT OF A REFERENDUM

Letter dated 6 February 1989 from Bishop Belo, the Apostolic Administrator of Dili, addressed to Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary-General

I take the liberty of writing you to let you know that the process of decolonization of Portuguese Timor has not yet been resolved by the United Nations, a fact that should not be forgotten. We, the people of Timor, believe that we should be consulted about the destiny of our homeland. That is why, as the one responsible for the Catholic Church, and as a citizen of Timor, I ask you through this letter to initiate in Timor a more normal and democratic process of decolonization that is achieved by means of a referendum. The people of Timor must be consulted about its future through a plebiscite. Up to now, the people have yet to be consulted. Others speak in the people's name: Indonesia declares that the people of Timor have already chosen integration, but the people of Timor have never said so; Portugal wishes that time will take care of this problem. Meanwhile, we are dying as a people and as a nation.

You are a democrat and a friend of human rights. Therefore, do demonstrate through deeds the respect for the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations which gives to all peoples on this planet the right to choose their own destiny in a free, conscientious and responsible manner.

There is not a more democratic way to ascertain the supreme will of the Timorese people than through a referendum promoted by the United Nations.

I thank you for all your sympathy for the people of Timor.

(Signed) Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, SDB
Titular Bishop of Lorium, Apostolic Administrator of Dili

Letter dated 30 June 1989 from Franz Cardinal König, President of Pax Christi International, addressed to the UN Secretary - General

"Dear Mr Secretary General,

Since the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia, Pax Christi International has intervened many times at the United Nations, denouncing the continuing abuses of human rights in East Timor and calling for the right to self-determination of the East Timorese people.

Recently a letter addressed to you by Bishop Belo of East Timor has come to my attention. In this letter Bishop Belo appeals to you to have the United Nations conduct a referendum to enable the East Timorese people to freely decide their own future.

Pax Christi believes that Bishop Belo's appeal should be seen, not as being motivated by personal or sectarian interests, but as embodying the wishes of the people as a whole.

The Catholic Church in East Timor, under its former leader Mgr da Costa Lopes, and its present leader, Bishop Belo, has consistently stood by the people in their suffering and shared their aspiration one day to live in freedom and dignity.

I therefore fully support Bishop Belo and add my voice to his in urging you to do everything in your power to realize a referendum in East Timor that will allow the Timorese people to freely choose their own fate."

On 6 February 1990, Manuel da Silva Martins, Bishop of Setùbal and President of Pax Christi Portugal sent a letter to several of his Bishops colleagues concerning the role of the United Nations in the question of East Timor and asked them to write a letter to Secretary General Perez de Cuellar.

"Your Excellency,

On 6 February 1989, a year ago today, the Bishop of East Timor, Msgr. Carlos Ximenes Belo, wrote in a letter addressed to the United Nations Secretary General that 'we are dying as a people and as a nation', and he asked the Secretary-General to promote the holding of a referendum on self-determination for his people.

At the same time Bishop Belo wrote to me, asking me to forward his letter to Mr. Perez de Cuellar and to help him 'in this battle for the referendum'.

East Timor is a former Portuguese colony which was invaded in 1975 by Indonesian armed forces, at a time when my own country, just emerging from a long period under dictatorship, was preparing independence for its colonies. Isolated from the rest of the world by the occupiers, the Timorese people has been subjected to one of the severest repressions known to recent history. Amnesty International believes that about 200,000 Timorese (one third of the total population) were killed in the first few years of the occupation. Today, the violence still goes on.

The visit to East Timor on 12 October 1989 of John Paul II was an excellent opportunity to inform international public opinion about the suffering of this people, the majority of whom are Catholics. The high rate of growth in numbers of the Catholic community since the invasion is linked to the courageous stands taken by the Church of East Timor as a whole, in defence of the cultural identity and profoundest aspirations of the people.

By asking the UN Secretary General that the Timorese people be allowed to express themselves with regard to their own future, the Bishop of Dili was not intending to get involved with politics, nor to indicate the solution the people will choose. Mgr. Belo is simply asking for the application of a right - recognised by the UN - unfulfilled until now on account of other interests.

In a second letter to me, Bishop Belo writes about the pressures brought to bear by the Indonesian authorities once his letter to the Secretary General became known: 'The Timorese 'deputies' were forced at gun-point to sign a statement affirming that they accept integration. The people, however, know all about the manoeuvres of the Indonesian military and government... The Christian people await the happy day when they may freely express their wishes as free men'. 'We continue to need your support', writes Mgr. Belo, who also asks that I pray for him, as 'at any time I may follow in the footsteps of Mgr. Romero'.

In view of the above, and following the example of the Bishop of Japan, Aloisius Soma, who last year asked the leaders of the Asia & Pacific Churches to support the Timorese Bishop's initiative, I propose to take part in the UN Decolonization Committee and to present Mr. Perez de Cuellar with the greatest number of letters possible in support of Mgr. Belo's request.

To achieve this I ask you to carefully read the letter from Bishop Belo and sign the letter of support, similar to the one already signed by 114 Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops from the Asia & Pacific region, and by 1,000 priests, religious and lay workers. The message is addressed to the UN Secretary General, but I ask that, once you have signed the letter, you kindly send it to me as soon as possible before the end of July, so I may then deliver all the letters to Mr. Perez de Cuellar when I go to the UN.

Furthermore, I ask that you and your Christian communities remember both the Church and the people of East Timor in your prayers.
Fraternally yours."

Mgr. da Silva Martins suggested the following draft for a letter to be signed by other bishops and to be sent to the Secretary General Dr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, July 1990:

"Dear Sir,
A letter addressed to Your Excellency by the Bishop of East Timor, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, has been brought to my attention. In the letter Bishop Belo appeals to your Excellency to have the United Nations conduct a referendum in East Timor to enable the East Timorese people to freely decide their future.

The Catholic Church in East Timor, under its former leader, Msg. da Costa Lopes, and its present leader, Bishop Belo, has consistently stood by the people in their suffering and shared their aspiration to one day live in freedom and dignity. Bishop Belo's appeal should be seen, not as being motivated by personal or sectarian interests, but as embodying the wishes of the people as a whole.

I fully support Bishop Belo and add my voice to his in urging you to do everything in your power to realize a referendum in East Timor that will allow the Timorese people to freely choose their own fate.

Respectfully yours."

■

4/ UN COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION 1990

Presentation for Pax Christi International by Sister Mary Beth Reissen, UN Representative, New York. Regional Seminar in Bridgetown, Barbados, 19 - 21 June, 1990

Pax Christi International Catholic Peace Movement welcomes this opportunity to participate in this important and timely seminar in commemoration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Pax Christi, founded in the aftermath of World War II in France, is an organization of Roman Catholics with an avowed purpose to work for peace for all humankind, always witnessing to the peace of Christ. Pax Christi's membership presently numbers some 100,000 persons, with 19 national sections and headquarters in Antwerp, Belgium.

At the heart of Pax Christi's work for peace is the recognition of human dignity, the dignity of each person as image and child of God. Such is the raison d'être for Pax Christi's efforts in the promotion of human rights. Pax Christi is opposed to all forms of discrimination and to all forms of violent rivalries.

For Pax Christi the right to self-determination is both a fundamental human right and an essential prerequisite for the full enjoyment of all other human rights. The right to selfdetermination belongs to a people and to each individual member of that people. Thus, in reality, the right to self-determination cannot be defined only in terms of group rights, for it is also the fundamental right of individuals.

The violation of the right to self-determination is a crime under international law (H.Gros-Espeill, UN Special Rapporteur of Self-determination, Report on the Right of Self-determination, § 80). States are not only under legal obligation to recognize the right of peoples to self-determination but also to respect, promote and assist peoples in its realization. This obligation is contained in the first articles of both International Covenants on Human Rights, in pronouncements of the International Court of Justice and in numerous United Nations resolutions.

This year has seen progress in the implementation of the right to self-determination of peoples. With the help of the United Nations, the people of Namibia have realized that right. Many peoples of Eastern Europe have reclaimed their right to self-determination. Pax Christi, which has devoted much effort to promoting the right of the peoples of Southern Africa and Eastern Europe to determine their own destiny, is very pleased with these developments and with the promise of improvements in South Africa.

While positive changes are taking place in some parts of the world, human rights, in particular the right to self-determination, are still being violated by too many governments. East Timor, a small island territory which shares a boundary with Indonesia, is a grave example of this violation of the right to self-determination.

Since the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia in December, 1975, Pax Christi has never ceased calling on UN Human Rights bodies to stop the massacres in East Timor. Pax Christi views more than 100,000 deaths in East Timor indicative of genocide in East Timor. Last month we received word from the Australian Council for Overseas Aid that massacres have occurred since April in several villages in the South-western districts of Ainaro and Bobonaro. Pax Christi deplores the continuing gross violations of human rights in East Timor, including summary executions, disappearances of many who have been taken prisoners, arbitrary detention, torture, forced sterilization.

Pax Christi calls for: the immediate cessation of all human rights violations; the end of Indonesian military operations in East

Timor (we have received word of a new operation in March); the withdrawal of Indonesia populations sent to East Timor; the opening of the entire territory to humanitarian assistance organizations and international human rights organizations.

Pax Christi continues to petition the Special Committee concerning East Timor. Pax Christi makes its own the appeal of Bishop Filipe X. Belo, SDB, Apostolic Administrator of Dili, to the UN Secretary General on February 6, 1989. Bishop Belo has requested that a referendum be conducted in East Timor under United Nations auspices. Pax Christi views Bishop Belo's appeal, not as being motivated by personal or sectarian interests, but as embodying the wishes of the people as a whole.

Pax Christi urges the Special Committee to dispatch a visiting mission to East Timor to meet with Bishop Belo and other East Timorese leaders "to recommend to the General Assembly the most suitable steps to be taken to enable the population of this Territory to exercise their right to self-determination and independence." Resolution UNGA 44/101, *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,* (§ 11.d).

Furthermore, Pax Christi expresses grave concern over the personal safety of Bishop Belo. There is an urgent need to guarantee freedom of expression for the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor and to end intimidation.

Regarding UNGA Resolution 44/102, *Dissemination of Information on Decolonization*, Pax Christi recommends that a Fact Sheet on East Timor be prepared. This Fact Sheet will be vital in making the general public aware of the East Timor situation. The names and summary statements of the Petitioners to the Special Committee on the subject of East Timor are recommended for inclusion in the Fact Sheet. It is noted that the Decolonization Series, Item Number 7, August, 1976, Issue of East Timor needs updating and republication. It would also be useful for a representative from the Special Committee to brief the NGO community at UN Headquarters during a regular Thursday UN Department of Public Information Briefing on the situation in East Timor../.

5/ Commemoration of the 2nd Anniversary of Bishop Belo's Appeal for a Referendum in East Timor, 6 February 1991

Message from Etienne De Jonghe, Secretary of Pax Christi International

A study should be made on the reasons why the annexation of a small country by a powerful neighbour in one part of the world leads to the mobilization of the largest and most sophisticated military force in recent history, while a similar event in another part of the world is met only by indifference and acquiescence, if not outright approval. Even if the UN have, since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, almost continually reaffirmed the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination, little has been done to ensure the effective implementation of this right, and the international public opinion has shown little concern over the issue.

Pax Christi International is one of those NGOs which has consistently tried to break down the wall of silence surrounding the situation in East Timor. The Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975 drew protests from various Pax Christi sections, and the International Council of Pax Christi has adopted several resolutions calling for an end to the military operations by the Indonesian troops and for the restoration of the Timorese people's right to self-determination. Pax Christi sections have urged their governments to ask Indonesia to take some concrete steps towards a solution of the Timorese problem, including the opening of the territory to humanitarian help organizations, the withdrawal of Indonesian populations sent to East Timor, the end of the military operations, and the renewal of the conversations between Indonesia and the representatives of East Timor. Pax Christi's concern about the continuing human rights violations also found expres-sion in the co-operation of various Pax Christi sections in the international Christian consultations on East Timor.

Pax Christi's concern with East Timor is, however, most notably reflected in the uninterrupted stream of our movement's interventions on this issue at the appropriate United Nations bodies. Since 1983, Pax Christi International has intervened fifteen times on the subject of East Timor at the yearly sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. In these interventions, our movement has always stressed the right to self-determination of the Timorese people, and denounced the ongoing human rights violations in the country, including the summary executions, the disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture, as well as the catastrophic conditions the population is living in. In February 1984, Mgr da Costa Lopes, Apostolic Administrator of Dili, addressing the UN Commission on Human Rights on behalf of Pax Christi International, said that only a genuine and completely free act of self-determination would bring peace to East Timor, and that the war would go on for as long as natural justice and freedom were denied to the East Timorese people.

Seven years later, the war has still not been brought to a close. Countless people have been killed, and repression is continuing unabated. In these circumstances, Pax Christi wants to express its support with the Catholic Church of East Timor, and especially with Bishop Belo in his defence of the legitimate rights of the Timorese people. In June 1989, our International President, Cardinal Franz König, responded to Bishop Soma's appeal to support Bishop Belo's call for a referendum to be organized by the United Nations in East Timor. In a letter to Secretary-General Pèrez de Cuéllar, Cardinal König added his voice to Bishop Belo's in urging the United Nations to do everything in their power to realize a referendum in East

Timor that would allow the Timorese people to determine their own fate. Pax Christi has also urged the UN Special Committee on Decolonization to dispatch a mission to East Timor in order to meet with Bishop Belo and other East Timorese leaders, and to recommend to the General Assembly the most suitable steps to be taken to enable the population of this territory to exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

Every day it becomes more important that organizations like Pax Christi should continue to raise their voice in order to awaken the conscience of the world concerning the struggle of a small, brave nation rejecting absorption by its neighbour for historical, ethical, religious, and cultural reasons. This people is paying a terribly high price to obtain the rights which belong to it by nature. Can history forgive silence in the face of such an injustice?"

Message from Bishop Gumbleton, President Pax Christi USA:

I write on this second anniversary with hope that Bishop Belo's request for a referendum in East Timor will be honoured at last. It is critically important that we hear and respond to the voice of Bishop Belo who speaks bravely as a 'Shepherd on behalf of his People'.

The suffering of the East Timorese people has gone unheeded for too many years. In sharp contrast to the multinational forces engaged in dislodging Iraq from Kuwait, International reaction against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor is limited and feeble. The UN Security Council resolutions on East Timor have not been implemented and the General Assembly has postponed for almost a decade any further consideration of the East Timor question.

Implementation of Bishop Belo's courageous appeal would be an authentic testimony in this UN decade of decolonization. As President of Pax Christi USA, I will make every effort to draw attention to the situation in East Timor. Also, I will call on Pax Christi USA to work for necessary US policy changes required for implementation of his appeal.

Message from Maria Luisa França, Vice-President Pax Christi Portugal

"./. the situation in the territory remains the same or still worse. The repression by the Indonesian invader has intensified in the last months. Recent news testifies to numerous arbitrary detentions, followed by torture, and several cases of disappearances. Facing up to this, the Portuguese section of Pax Christi expresses its concern about this grave situation of violations of human rights and the rights of the people. ./. we cannot but express our astonishment of the use of 'two weights and two measures' by the international community regarding the application of international law. ./. it cannot be forgotten that just after the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia, the UN Security Council, in its Resolution 384, 'appealed' to Indonesia to retire without delay its troops from the territory. This resolution was approved unanimously 15 years ago../. In view of this, Pax Christi Portugal, following the request of Mgr. Belo, the subsequent appeal of Mgr. Martins, and all those who subscribed to this demand, continues to insist before the UN on a referendum for the East Timorese people. The Timorese people must be allowed to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination, recognized by the UN, and freely express their wish regarding their own future."

Kuwait-East Timor: Report by Sr. M.B. Reisen

The parallel between Kuwait and East Timor was emphasized by many participants in the meeting (7 Febr.1991) to mark the second anniversary of the letter of

Bishop Belo of Dili, East Timor, to the UN Secretary-General regarding the decolonization of (Portuguese) East Timor. This meeting, under the joint sponsorship of Pax Christi International and the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, was held on February 6, 1991, at the Church Center for the UN, New York City.

Bishop Belo, as a spokesperson for the people of East Timor, stated in his February 6, 1989 letter: "We are dying as a people and a nation." He asked the UN Secretary-General to support the desire of the East Timorese people for a referendum under UN auspices.

The Indonesian army invaded East Timor in 1975 and declared the region Indonesia's 27th province just as Iraq declared Kuwait its 19th province. Almost immediately after the Indonesian invasion, 60,000 people, 10% of the population at that time, were killed. In the ensuing period, at least 200,000 people have lost their lives under Indonesian occupation.

In his remarks at this commemorative meeting, the Right Reverend Paul Moore, Episcopal Bishop of New York, retired, who visited Bishop Belo as part of a human rights mission to East Timor in December, 1989, stated: 'The East Timorese people have suffered intensely over the years. Their hope has been kept alive that the United Nations would ensure their choice for the future.' Bishop Moore deplored both the lack of action by the UN and the lack of public knowledge about the plight of the East Timorese people under Indonesian occupation.

The representatives of non-governmental organizations present pointed to the parallel between Kuwait and East Timor. Ambassador Reino of Portugal mentioned that the Kuwait-East Timor parallel had also been discussed at the current session of the UN Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Kan Akatani read a letter from the Bishop of Nagoya, Japan, Aloisius N. Soma. Speaking on behalf of the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, Bishop Soma supported the letter of Bishop Belo and pointed out that the people of East Timor had organized three protest demonstrations resulting in imprisonments in the last two years. "The people's aspiration for self-determination is undeniably real," asserted Bishop Soma. Emphasizing that "the invasion of East Timor was in clear violation of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Bishopxoma observed that "the influx of Indonesians in East Timor was "eroding the East Timorese people's right to self-determination." Bishop Soma pointed to wide support among the Catholic Bishops of Asia-Oceania when he initiated a campaign on behalf of Bishop Belo in 1989. He stated that a similar campaign was underway in Europe.

In his message to the meeting, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, President of Pax Christi USA, observed that the implementation of Bishop Belo's appeal would be an authentic testimony in this UN decade of decolonization (1990-2000). He pledged every effort on the part of Pax Christi USA to work to raise the moral conscience of US policy-makers towards East Timor.

Those attending the meeting endorsed a resolution of Pax Christi International urging the UN Human Rights Commission to update its findings on the status of human rights of the people of East Timor and to take all necessary steps to ascertain their aspirations regarding their future status.

Pax Christi continues to urge the UN Special Committee on Decolonization to send a mission to East Timor to meet with Bishop Belo and other leaders in order to recommend the most suitable steps for the East Timorese people to realize their self-determination. To date, in the case of East Timor, the UN has not applied its own resolutions regarding decolonization. ■

6/ PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA AND EAST TIMOR, 1991

Declaration

Pax Christi Australia will continue to show concern for East Timor and make interventions at the appropriate United Nations bodies and on the national and local level. In Australia there are substantial communities of East Timorese. Pax Christi members are urged to join them in calling on the Australian government to ask Indonesia to take some concrete steps towards a solution, to end military operations and to renew conversations between Indonesia and the representatives of the Timorese people. Several members of Pax Christi Australia, who have recently visited East Timor, can attest that the war still goes on. Countless people have been killed and repression continues unabated. The Australian section wants to express support for the church in East Timor, especially with Bishop Belo in his courageous defence of the legitimate rights of the Timorese people.

Letter

A letter was sent from Pax Christi Australia supporting the proposal by the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes to establish a human right office in East Timor. Pax Christi Australia support the decision to send three representatives of the Conference to visit East Timor to discuss this prospects with the church and the Bishop in East Timor. ■

Pax Christi is an international Catholic peace movement, with national sections in four continents. Its activities are mainly related to the issues of security & disarmament; human rights; East-West contacts; North-South relations; peace education; peace spirituality; nonviolence; faith, dialogue and reconciliation; integrity of creation. Pax Christi has consultative status at the United Nations, Unesco and the Council of Europe. It is the recipient of the 1983 Unesco Peace Education Prize and of the 1987 U.N. Peace Messenger Award.

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